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ABSTRACT

The task force report examines recommendations for nondiscriminatory assessment of children from linguistic minorities. An initial suggestion is made for a moratorium on the use of standardized intelligence tests for these students. Recommendations are addressed to the U.S. Education Department (including requiring state education agencies to report data on four categories of children from linguistic minorities); state education agencies (including assigning staff to be responsible for coordinating and monitoring state level bilingual special education); formulation of the annual program plan; assessment practices and procedures; and local education agencies (including developing policies and procedures for screening, prereferral intervention, referral, assessment, and placement). (CL)

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THE TIME FOR ACTION:

Positions and Recommendations of the Task Force on Crosscultural Assessment

June 1980

Developed by
The Task Force on Crosscultural Assessment

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Task Force on Crosscultural Assessment

June 1980

Sponsored by:

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Hightstown, New Jersey

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PREFACE

THE TASK FORCE ON CROSSCULTURAL ASSESSMENT

In early 1979 the Advisory Board of the Northeast Regional Resource Center identified the development of non-discriminatory methods of assessment for children from linguistic minorities as an important and widely shared concern.

Informal discussions indicated an intense interest in the issues related to crosscultural assessment in the northeastern states.

The Task Force on Crosscultural Assessment was formed to develop a set of recommendations concerning the assessment of children from linguistic minorities.

The Task Force currently includes representatives from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Four Regional Resource Centers are represented including the Northeast Regional Resource Center, the New York City Regional Resource Center, the Mideast Regional Resource Center and the Southeast Regional Resource Center.

A variety of levels and departments within State Education Agencies are represented on the Task Force. The Appendix contains a list of Task Force members.

CLIENT STATES OF THE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS
INVOLVED IN THE TASK FORCE ON CROSSCULTURAL ASSESSMENT

Northeast Regional Resource Center *

Connecticut *
Maine *
Massachusetts *
New Hampshire
New Jersey *
Rhode Island *
Vermont

New York City Regional Resource Center *

New York City

Southeast Regional Resource Center *

Alabama
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
Puerto Rico
South Carolina
Virgin Islands

Mideast Regional Resource Center *

Delaware
Maryland
North Carolina
West Virginia

* Represented on Task Force

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INTRODUCTION

THE TARGET POPULATION

The positions and recommendations in this document focus on a group of children identified as "children from linguistic minorities". This group is composed of those children who are native speakers of a language other than English.

This group includes both children from immigrant families and children from native-born American families who speak languages other than English.

The Task Force's definition of the target group is intentionally broad. Screening procedures currently overlook a great many children who have educational and social difficulties owing to early experiences of a language other than English in their home and/or community environment. *Screening and assessment must clearly address the entire group of children who are known to speak a language other than English.*

It would also be well to observe that these descriptions of the target group suffer from a major weakness. A language cannot usefully be separated from the cultural context in which it is spoken. Different cultures sometimes share a common language (e.g Haiti and France, England and the United States). Cognitive styles in such cultures may differ widely. Though language provides a reasonable means of identifying children from linguistic minorities, *the child's culture must be considered in the process of assessment or education.*

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Task Force is aware that many of its positions and recommendations have application to a much broader group. This group would include all children who are culturally different from the white, urban, middle class core culture and all children who speak dialects of English.

The Task Force does not wish to merely identify a new species of what might be called "endangered children" - children who have special educational needs and problems. The Task Force suggests, rather, that the educational system's inability to provide appropriate services to children from linguistic minorities might more correctly be viewed as a symptom of a larger problem.

This larger problem can only be addressed through the development of an approach to the education of all children which recognizes the cultural diversity of our society. Piecemeal remedies for discriminatory practices toward particular groups of children will not alone achieve any lasting solution to this problem.

The Task Force urges the development of a multicultural approach to education in the belief that such an approach would enrich the educational experiences of all children.

FIRST STEPS

The Task Force on Crosscultural Assessment urges State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies to institute a moratorium on the use of standardized intelligence tests in the assessment of children from linguistic minorities.

This moratorium should ideally be expanded to preclude the use of such tests in the assessment of all other children from minority cultures regardless of the native language of these children. In particular such tests would not be used in assessment of Black children or Native Americans.

The current practice of using standardized intelligence tests in assessing children from linguistic minorities results in inappropriate educational placements for these children.

The consensus among educators has long been that the use of standardized intelligence tests in the assessment of children from linguistic minorities is a questionable practice. An immediate moratorium on such uses of the tests is the only appropriate response to this consensus.

The moratorium would stimulate a realistic discussion of the issues concerning the assessment of children from linguistic minorities. This discussion would, of necessity, be focused on the development of alternative methods.

The Task Force also urges the re-evaluation of all children from linguistic minorities who are currently placed in special education programs to determine if such placement is appropriate. This re-evaluation should be conducted as soon as it is practical to do so using procedures sensitive to the children's languages and cultures.

Concurrently with this re-evaluation, there should be a thorough screening of all children in bilingual education programs to identify those children who are potentially educationally handicapped.

The Task Force believes that the proposed actions would be important steps toward the elimination of discrimination on a cultural and linguistic basis within our educational system. These steps would imply an underlying commitment to the development of an educational system which truly reflects the multicultural nature of modern America.

THE LEGAL MANDATES

In Lau v. Nichols (1974) the Supreme Court made a landmark decision concerning bilingual and bicultural education. *The superficially egalitarian practice of providing the same forms of assessment and subsequent programming for minority children as that available for white students was ruled unconstitutional.*

Lau v. Nichols clearly established that schools cannot provide equal opportunity for students merely by treating everyone uniformly. There was a clear recognition that such uniform treatment provided advantages to white, English-speaking students.

The principle that students' linguistic or cultural differences cannot be construed to constitute evidence of an educational handicapping condition has been clearly established in several cases in state courts. These include: Diana v. the State Board of Education (California, 1973); Larry P. v. Wilson Riles, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California (California, 1979); and Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School children, et al v. Ann Arbor School District Board, F. Supp. 1371 ED (Michigan, 1979).

In Jose P. et al v. Gordon M. Ambach et al (New York, 1979), a New York court found that the New York City Board of Education must "provide for evaluation of students in the native language or mode of communication of the student involved, except where it is clearly not feasible to do so."

In Lora v. Board of Education of the City of New York, 465 F. Supp. 1211 (1977), the court affirmed the principle that the current overrepresentation of minority students in special education constituted a violation of these students' rights.

The implications of these legal mandates for the educational system are clear. The system must develop new non-discriminatory means to assess and serve students from minority cultures and language groups.

A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

General

Current approaches to the assessment and education of children from linguistic minorities are clearly inappropriate.

Children from linguistic minorities are currently overrepresented in some special education classifications. Many of these children do not have educational handicapping conditions; they simply have not had the opportunity to master the English language and are not familiar with the core culture. Special education programs are generally not able to serve these children appropriately.

Children from linguistic minorities are, on the other hand, underrepresented in some special education classifications, particularly those requiring extensive resources. Children from linguistic minorities who require the services provided in these classifications are frequently "underserved".

There are as well many children from linguistic minorities who have educational handicapping conditions, but who have not been identified or classified as such. Some of the children are identified and classified, but inappropriately placed.

The issues of crosscultural assessment have been extensively discussed in recent years. The time has come to take action.

The action taken should neither be makeshift nor merely remedial. The Task Force urges the development of comprehensive strategies for assessing and educating these children.

Data Collection

The understanding of the problem of providing an appropriate assessment and education for children from linguistic minorities is plagued by a general lack of information. The present systems for collecting data on these children at the federal, state or local levels cannot provide this information.

Many states do not collect data on the numbers of children from linguistic minorities or the numbers of children in particular language groups. Those states presently collecting such data do so in a variety of different manners, making valid comparison impossible.

Administration and Coordination

In consideration of the high risk of inappropriate educational placements for children from linguistic minorities it is desirable that bilingual programs and special education programs be closely coordinated. Many State Education Agencies currently do not provide such coordination.

In many states bilingual special education programs are not characterized by clear administrative structures. In many states no one is assigned the responsibility of monitoring these programs at a state level or coordinating these programs at a local level.

The Human Resources

Professional standards concerning competencies in bilingual education and bilingual special education are presently insufficient.

In many states there are, for instance, no adequate procedures for determining if a teacher or other professional is completely bilingual. There are no commonly accepted, consistent methods for determining minimal levels of linguistic competency for any of the professionals involved in assessing and teaching children from particular language groups. There are no standards for determining who may act as an interpreter during assessment, or, indeed, determining when an interpreter may be appropriately used in assessment.

Research and Development

There are a good many unanswered questions concerning the assessment and education of children from linguistic minorities.

Very little of what is known concerning the impact of culture and language on learning has been applied to the assessment and education of children from linguistic minorities. The implications of behavioral and cognitive differences among children from different cultural and language groups define a direction for future research.

Research will also be required for the development of appropriate tests and other procedures for use in assessment of children from linguistic minorities.

Assessment Practices

As previously stated, current assessment practices result in inappropriate placements for children from linguistic minorities in special education programs. In some cases the child has limited communication skills in English but does not have an educational handicapping condition. Determination of the child's communication skills and dominance in both English and his/her native language occur, if at all, after other assessment procedures. This practice gives support to the unfortunate notion that a child who has limited communication skills in English has a handicapping condition.

At present, assessment of children from linguistic minorities is often conducted in English, if the child understands that language at all. If the child speaks no English, the assessment may be conducted through an interpreter. This interpreter often has little or no understanding of the assessment process.

Educators have a tendency to rely on "tests" to find out what they need to know about a child. This reliance on the quantifiable and the categorical effectively blinds us to the complexities of crosscultural assessment. Since the tests used are rarely normed on a population of which the child from a linguistic minority is a member, the resulting findings are often clearly invalid.

Current assessment practices do not represent any comprehensive effort to describe either the actual cultural and linguistic context of a child in the home and in the community or the child's functioning within the environment.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE

General Commentary: Towards Responsible Professional Practice

The Task Force regards the proposed development of a comprehensive system of assessment of children from linguistic minorities to be the central recommendation of this document.

For each child from a linguistic minority a multidisciplinary assessment team should be composed. This team should include at least one person who speaks the child's language and is familiar with the child's culture and one person experienced in bilingual education, preferably in the child's language.

A determination of the level of communication skills and dominance in both English and the native language should precede all other assessment procedures.

The child should be observed by the assessment team in a variety of settings including the classroom. An attempt should be made to describe how the child functions in these settings.

A team member thoroughly knowledgeable concerning the child's language and culture should prepare a home survey based on a visit to the child's home. This team member would attempt to discover what language the family normally speaks, what language is spoken in the community, what exposure the child has had to the English-speaking core culture, and what previous education the child has had. The staff member would gather as much information as possible about the child's previous history and experience.

The assessment should focus on determining how the child functions, both socially and academically in both English and the native language.

All assessment techniques and procedures, including standardized tests, should be appropriate to the child considering the child's age group, cultural or linguistic group, socioeconomic background, communication skill level in English, familiarity with the core culture and ability to function independently in a variety of social settings. All procedures and techniques should be administered

by an appropriately qualified professional who is thoroughly familiar with the child's culture and language.

The assessment should include all the components of the comprehensive assessment mandated by federal and state laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATION

Commentary

The development of an effective system to collect, analyze and disseminate data concerning children from linguistic minorities is an important step toward a better understanding of the problems which the educational system faces in assessing and educating these children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD REQUIRE STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF THEIR DATA-GATHERING PROCESS WITH RESPECT TO THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN:

- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUP;
- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WHO HAVE LIMITED COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH, ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUP;
- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WHO HAVE EDUCATIONAL HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY OF HANDICAP, TYPE OF PLACEMENT AND LANGUAGE GROUP;
- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WHO HAVE EDUCATIONAL HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS AND WHO HAVE LIMITED COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH, ACCORDING TO CATEGORY OF HANDICAP, TYPE OF PLACEMEMT AND LANGUAGE GROUP.

1.1.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OF LINGUISTIC OR CULTURAL GROUPS IN ANY SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.

1.2 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENSURE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AMONG EDUCATION AGENCIES AND OTHER INVOLVED AGENCIES IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA CONCERNING ALL CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES. A REGULAR SYSTEM OF INFORMATION-SHARING AMONG SUCH AGENCIES SHOULD BE MAINTAINED.

1.3 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD ENSURE THAT AVAILABLE DATA CONCERNING ALL CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IS SUMMARIZED, ANALYZED AND DISSEMINATED TO EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES, OTHER INVOLVED AGENCIES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

TRAINING

Commentary

The United States Education Department should take the lead in stimulating training programs related to bilingual special education. In this area, as in any relatively new area of endeavor, training needs are paramount. The future of bilingual special education largely depends on our present efforts to provide appropriate training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 THE BUREAU OF EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED SHOULD REQUIRE THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT OF EACH STATE EDUCATION AGENCY TO ADDRESS ANY CRITICAL AREAS IDENTIFIED IN THE PROCESS OF ANALYZING DATA COLLECTED CONCERNING ALL CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES. PARTICULAR ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION AREA. AVAILABLE FUNDS SHOULD BE DESIGNATED FOR TRAINING PROGRAMS IN SPECIFIC AREAS.

2.2 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD SPONSOR OR PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- AWARENESS OF AND SENSITIVITY TO SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES;
- UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPACT OF CULTURE ON LEARNING;
- UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN ASSESSING CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES FOR SUCH ASSESSMENT.

2.2.1 THESE TRAINING PROGRAMS SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO SEA PERSONNEL, PERSONNEL OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND LEA PERSONNEL.

2.3 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD SOLICIT REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS IN AREAS RELATED TO TRAINING IN BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

The understanding of appropriate techniques and approaches for the assessment of children from linguistic minorities is hampered by a lack of information. The development of a comprehensive system of assessment for these children requires considerable research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FUNDS FOR A REVIEW OF EXISTING MODELS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES RELATED TO THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES. THIS REVIEW SHOULD DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE CONTINUED USE OF THESE MODELS, TECHNIQUES AND APPROACHES.

3.2 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FUNDS TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

3.2.1 THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FUNDS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT PILOT PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTING THIS COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM.

3.2.2 THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FUNDS TO APPRAISE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM.

3.3 THE UNITED STATES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOULD REVIEW THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF DISSEMINATING INFORMATION CONCERNING RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ENSURE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS MADE AVAILABLE TO EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND OTHER INVOLVED AGENCIES.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Commentary

State Education Agencies have a responsibility to ensure that children from linguistic minorities have educational opportunities equal to those of other children. In accordance with the Lau decision, the *same* resources, facilities, text books, etc. do not provide *equal* opportunities for minority children.

Bilingual special education services suffer from an overall lack of coordination at both state and local levels. This means, in many cases, that children do not receive the full benefit of available resources. Several of the following recommendations focus on remedying this situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD ASSIGN STAFF TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COORDINATION AND MONITORING OF BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION AT THE STATE LEVEL.

4.2 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES WITH LINGUISTIC MINORITIES TO ASSIGN STAFF TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COORDINATION AND PROVISION OF BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.

4.3 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD DEVELOP STANDARDS OF COMPETENCY FOR ALL PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES INCLUDING PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE ASSESSMENTS OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

4.3.1 SUCH STANDARDS SHOULD INCLUDE CRITERIA FOR COMPETENCY IN LANGUAGE BASED ON THE RESULTS OF STANDARDIZED LANGUAGE TESTS.

4.3.2 THERE SHOULD BE A METHOD FOR FORMAL APPROVAL OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. (e.g., LICENSURE, CERTIFICATION, APPROVAL.)

4.4 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD COMPILE A LIST OF PERSONS OR AGENCIES QUALIFIED TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO CHILDREN FROM PARTICULAR LANGUAGE GROUPS OR CULTURES. THIS LIST WOULD INCLUDE PSYCHOLOGISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, INTERPRETERS, EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIANS AND DIAGNOSTIC AGENCIES.

4.5 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD DEVELOP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF INTERPRETERS IN THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES AND A MECHANISM FOR FORMALLY APPROVING INTERPRETERS FOR SUCH USE.

4.5.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE THAT CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF INTERPRETERS IN ASSESSMENT ENSURE THAT AN INTERPRETER WILL BE USED ONLY IF THE CHILD IS FROM A LANGUAGE GROUP OF LOW INCIDENCE ON A STATEWIDE BASIS AND NO APPROPRIATE RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND.

4.6 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD DEVELOP A FORMULA TO MAKE AVAILABLE MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES FOR CHILDREN WHO REQUIRE BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION AND OTHER CATEGORICAL SERVICES.

4.7 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE SPECIFIC ASSURANCES FROM LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES THAT THE RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES ARE EQUAL TO THOSE AVAILABLE TO OTHER CHILDREN. THESE ASSURANCES WOULD ACCORD WITH THE PRINCIPLE STATED IN THE LAU DECISION THAT, "THERE IS NO EQUALITY OF TREATMENT MERELY BY PROVIDING STUDENTS WITH THE SAME FACILITIES, TEXT BOOKS, TEACHERS, AND CURRICULUM; FOR STUDENTS WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND ENGLISH ARE EFFECTIVELY FORECLOSED FROM ANY MEANINGFUL EDUCATION". SERVICES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES SHOULD INCLUDE:

- REGULAR PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES;
- CONSULTATIVE AND DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES;
- ON-GOING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT;
- COMMUNITY AGENCY SUPPORT;
- INSTRUCTION IN THE DOMINANT LANGUAGE.

FORMULATION OF THE ANNUAL PROGRAM PLAN

Commentary

The State Education Agency has an important responsibility in gathering and reporting data concerning children from linguistic minorities in a manner which will foster a better understanding of the problems faced in educating these children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD EXPAND THE PRESENT DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM TO INCLUDE DATA CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN:

- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUP;
- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WHO HAVE LIMITED COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH, ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUP;
- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WHO HAVE EDUCATIONAL HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS ACCORDING TO CATEGORY OF HANDICAP, TYPE OF PLACEMENT AND LANGUAGE GROUP;
- CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES WHO HAVE EDUCATIONAL HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS AND WHO HAVE LIMITED COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH, ACCORDING TO CATEGORY OF HANDICAP, TYPE OF PLACEMENT AND LANGUAGE GROUP.

5.1.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES TO PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OF LINGUISTIC OR CULTURAL GROUPS IN ANY SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM.

5.2 AS AN ELEMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL PLAN LEADING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MECHANISM FOR ESTABLISHING THE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF PERSONNEL, THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD COLLECT INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED, CERTIFIED OR LICENSED PERSONNEL WHO ARE, BY SELF-REPORT, BILINGUAL (e.g. PSYCHOLOGISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIANS, SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS).

5.3 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD ENSURE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION WITH EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND OTHER INVOLVED AGENCIES IN THE COLLECTION OF DATA CONCERNING ALL CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

5.4 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD ENSURE THAT AVAILABLE DATA CONCERNING ALL CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IS SUMMARIZED, ANALYZED AND DISSEMINATED TO EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES, OTHER INVOLVED AGENCIES, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

5.5 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE THAT THE ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANS OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PRACTICES OF ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

5.6 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE THAT THE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT SECTION OF THE ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANS OF LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ALL STAFF IN THE ISSUES RELATED TO THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

TRAINING

Commentary

The development of a cadre of trained personnel must be the primary focus of initial efforts to create improvements in the services provided to children from linguistic minorities. The State Education Agency has the major responsibility for stimulating the growth of such a group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD ENSURE THAT PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR ALL EDUCATION PERSONNEL IN LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

- AWARENESS OF AND SENSITIVITY TO SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES;
- UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPACT OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ON LEARNING;
- UNDERSTANDING OF PATTERNS OF ACQUISITION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LANGUAGES;
- UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES;
- APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES FOR SUCH ASSESSMENT.

6.2 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD WORK THROUGH ITS SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ENCOURAGE THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF BILINGUAL PEOPLE TO FILL REQUIRED PERSONNEL POSITIONS INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS.

6.2.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD STIMULATE THE GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR BILINGUAL PERSONNEL THROUGH DELIBERATE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.

6.3 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD RECOGNIZE ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN THIS AREA BY URGING LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES TO APPLY FOR AVAILABLE FUNDS AND DISTRIBUTING FUNDS ALREADY AVAILABLE FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES.

6.4 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD REQUIRE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES WITH LINGUISTIC MINORITIES TO INCLUDE TRAINING FOR ALL STAFF IN THE ISSUES RELATED TO ASSESSING AND EDUCATING THIS POPULATION IN THE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

6.5 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD HIRE AND TRAIN PERSONNEL WHO CAN FUNCTION IN BOTH SPECIAL EDUCATION AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE A CONTINUING DIALOGUE AMONG PERSONNEL WORKING IN BOTH AREAS.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Commentary

The development of a comprehensive system of assessment for children from linguistic minorities is a major recommendation of the Task Force. The development of policies and guidelines at a state level is a key part of this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD DEVELOP POLICIES AND GUIDELINES OUTLINING A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF ASSESSMENT FOR CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES. THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE OBSERVED IN THESE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES:

7.1.1 STANDARDIZED INTELLIGENCE TESTS WILL NOT BE USED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

7.1.2 A DETERMINATION OF THE CHILD'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND DOMINANCE BOTH IN ENGLISH AND THE NATIVE LANGUAGE, SHALL BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO ANY OTHER FORM OF ASSESSMENT.

7.1.3 ALL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE CHILD CONSIDERING THE CHILD'S AGE, CULTURAL OR LINGUISTIC GROUP, PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH, FAMILIARITY WITH THE CORE CULTURE, AND ABILITY TO FUNCTION INDEPENDENTLY AND IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT.

7.1.4 ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS SHALL INCLUDE DISCUSSIONS OF THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CHILD'S HOME AND COMMUNITY, GENERAL FEATURES OF THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT, THE EXTENT OF THE CHILD'S EXPOSURE TO THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CORE CULTURE, THE CHILD'S ADAPTATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS, AND THE CHILD'S PREVIOUS EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

7.1.5 THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES SHOULD INCLUDE A VISIT TO THE CHILD'S HOME AND COMMUNITY BY AN APPROPRIATELY TRAINED BILINGUAL TEAM MEMBER FAMILIAR WITH THE CHILD'S CULTURE AND LANGUAGE.

7.1.6 THE ASSESSMENT TEAM FOR A CHILD FROM A LINGUISTIC MINORITY SHOULD INCLUDE A PERSON EXPERIENCED IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION, PREFERABLY IN THE CHILD'S LANGUAGE.

7.1.7 THE ASSESSMENT MUST BE CONDUCTED IN THE CHILD'S NATIVE LANGUAGE BY APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS UNLESS IT IS DOCUMENTED THAT THE CHILD MAY APPROPRIATELY BE ASSESSED IN ENGLISH.

7.1.8 EXEMPTIONS TO POLICIES AND GUIDELINES SHALL NOT BE GRANTED UNLESS THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY HAS DOCUMENTED THAT STRICT ADHERENCE IS IMPOSSIBLE. EXEMPTIONS TO GUIDELINES INVOLVING THE USE OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL SHALL NOT BE GRANTED WITHOUT EVIDENCE THAT THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY HAS ADVERTISED IN APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA AND CONTACTED OTHER EDUCATION AGENCIES, COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN AN EFFORT TO FIND APPROPRIATE RESOURCES.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

GENERAL

Commentary

At a local level the abstrations of policies and guidelines become realities. It is essential that Local Education Agencies have an effective, systematic and positive approach to the involvement of a variety of cultures and language groups in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD DEVELOP POLICIES AND SYSTEMATIC ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE SCREENING, PRE-REFERRAL INTERVENTION STRATEGIES, REFERRAL, ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

8.2 THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THE POSITIVE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS.

8.2.1 SUCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE INVOLVEMENT BY LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS. SUCH MEASURES SHOULD GO BEYOND THE PUBLICATION OF PAMPHLETS.

8.3 THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IS CONDUCTED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

8.3.1 STANDARDIZED INTELLIGENCE TESTS WILL NOT BE USED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES.

8.3.2 A DETERMINATION OF THE CHILD'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND DOMINANCE BOTH IN ENGLISH AND THE NATIVE LANGUAGE SHALL BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO ANY OTHER FORM OF ASSESSMENT.

8.3.3 ALL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE CHILD CONSIDERING THE CHILD'S AGE, CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC GROUP, PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH, FAMILIARITY WITH THE CORE CULTURE, AND THE ABILITY TO FUNCTION INDEPENDENTLY AND IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT.

8.3.4 ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS SHALL INCLUDE DISCUSSIONS OF THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CHILD'S HOME AND COMMUNITY, GENERAL FEATURES OF THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT, THE EXTENT OF THE CHILD'S EXPOSURE TO THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CORE CULTURE, THE CHILD'S ADAPTATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS, AND THE CHILD'S PREVIOUS EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

8.3.5 THE ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN FROM LINGUISTIC MINORITIES SHOULD INCLUDE A VISIT TO THE CHILD'S HOME AND COMMUNITY BY A BILINGUAL TEAM MEMBER FAMILIAR WITH THE CHILD'S CULTURE AND LANGUAGE.

8.3.6 THE ASSESSMENT TEAM FOR A CHILD FROM A LINGUISTIC MINORITY SHOULD INCLUDE A PERSON EXPERIENCED IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION, PREFERABLY IN THE CHILD'S LANGUAGE.

8.3.7 THE ASSESSMENT MUST BE CONDUCTED IN THE CHILD'S NATIVE LANGUAGE BY APPROPRIATELY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS UNLESS IT IS DOCUMENTED THAT THE CHILD MAY APPROPRIATELY BE ASSESSED IN ENGLISH.

AFTERWORD

The preceding recommendations will not immediately remedy all of the problems involved in educating children from linguistic minorities.

These recommendations are first steps toward a positive multicultural strategy for American education.

We urge the educational system to take these steps.

It always sounds reasonable to call for discussion of a difficult issue. There is surely also an appropriate time to call, not so much for the end of discussion as for the beginning of action. The time for action has arrived.

GLOSSARY

Bilingual Education - A transitional regular program for linguistic minority students using both the native language of the students and English as a means of instruction.

Bilingual Special Education - Providing special education services to linguistic minority students in their native language, or in English and their native language.

Children From Linguistic Minorities - All children who are native speakers of a language other than English.

Communication Skills - All skills involved in functioning in a particular language including listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Crosscultural Assessment - Assessment of children from one language group and culture by persons from another language group and culture, particularly assessment of children from linguistic minorities by English-speaking representatives of the core culture.

Dominant Language - The language normally used by a person for communication. A person thinks, counts, dreams and prefers to communicate with friends in the dominant language.

Native Language - A language spoken by a person as a result of ethnic or national origin.

Primary or First Language - The first language learned by a person.

Secondary or Second Language - The second language learned by a person.

APPENDIX

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TASK FORCE ON CROSSCULTURAL ASSESSMENT

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